

WHO SAYS A MUST SAY B

GEORGE J. LEVENBACH

New Providence, New Jersey

Editor's Note: The following appears in Section 90d of Battus's Opperlandse taal- & letterkunde (Querido, 1981), and was translated by George Levenbach.

It is not well-known that a Dutch airline once played a role in the draining of the Noordoostpolder¹. The Department of Water Management² divided the N.O.P. into quadrants and borrowed from KLM³ the PH-OE1⁴ to fly all day over the imaginary lines in order for the workers on the ground to orient themselves properly. For the pilots this was boring work - especially so for the legendary ex-Russian pilot Smirnoff⁵ who detested flying around in little square patterns. He would, in fact, much rather have flown on the Goudkust⁶ of South Carolina, or, as he himself would say, "Gdkust en Sth Carolina" because he could not pronounce the diphthong ou.

Flip Gortzak, who in those years was the Financial Genius of KLM at the Eelde airport, the home base of the N.O.P. pilots, told me an amusing story about Smirnoff. F.G., as everyone called him, because of his initials, his occupation, and his love of Florins and Guilders, told Smirnoff that Plesman⁷ intended to provide the same alignment service for the work then being carried out on the Amsterdam-Rhine canal near Abcoude⁸. Smirnoff reacted to this with the outburst "Als boven Abcde, F.G., hij KLM N.O.P.-quadranten laat vliegen, dan ga ik terug naar Mosk"⁹ ["If he (Plesman) makes me fly KLM Noordoostpolder quadrants above Abcoude, F.G., I'm going back to Moscow"].

- 1 The Noordoostpolder, or Northeast Polder (N.O.P.), is part of the long-range reclamation of the inland Zuyder Zee for agriculture.
- 2 This is a Dutch government agency charged with the oversight of the canal system.
- 3 The acronym of the Dutch national airline.
- 4 The identification letters for a particular plane, no doubt selected because of its homonymy with "phooey".
- 5 Smirnoff was a well-known KLM pilot of the 1930s, who helped develop the airline route between the Netherlands and Indonesia. This had some of the glamour of the early Pan-American flying clipper route across the Pacific about the same time, or of the earlier Orient Express.
- 6 Goudkust means "gold coast"; this is located in South Carolina instead of Florida so that a second ou-word could be used.

- 7 Plesman was the director-general of KLM from the 1930s through the 1950s.
- 8 Abcoude is a Dutch town near the Amsterdam-Rhine canal.
- 9 In Dutch, this word is *Moskou*, but Smirnoff still can't pronounce the diphthong.

TWO WORD BOOKS FROM CHAMBERS

W & R Chambers Ltd., 43-45 Annandale Street, Edinburgh EH7 4AZ Scotland, has published two paperback books of interest to recreational linguists. The first, *Chambers Words*, was originally issued in 1976; it consists of an alphabetical listing by word-length of all words in the *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*. There are a surprisingly large number of words which are not found in larger American dictionaries such as the second and third editions of the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged*. The book's principal shortcoming is its practice of listing derived words (plurals, past tenses, participles, etc.) with the base word instead of with words of their own length.

The second book, *Chambers Anagrams*, compiled by "Esther C. Zwart" and other anagrams of Peter Schwarz, is based upon the same dictionary and was newly issued in 1985. This contains more than 100,000 words of 5 to 15 letters in length, including hyphenated ones, arranged anagrammatically (as ceorst CORSET CORTES COSTER ESCORT SCOTER SECTOR, ceorsu COURSE CROUSE SOURCE, ceorsv CORVES, etc.). Since few plurals, past tenses, etc., are included, the book fails the Silverman test for a comprehensive anagram dictionary - it does not have aabeilnst BANALITIES INSATIABLE. Nevertheless, this is the most comprehensive anagram dictionary in print, and should be acquired by the serious logologist or cryptic crossworder.

Each of these books is available in England for £6.95. Unfortunately, Chambers does not have a United States outlet for their books, but they will be willing to supply by mail order if people request a "pro-forma" invoice.